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Sen. Clinton Talks Forgiveness in L.A.

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U.S. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton spoke about forgiveness at Yom Kippur services in Beverly Hills, closing out what became a safe and reflective High Holidays for the Southern California Jewish community.

"Forgiveness has little or nothing to do with fairness," Clinton said in a 23-minute speech at Temple of the Arts in Beverly Hills. "Life is never fair. It is full of things that can never be excused."

The New York Democrat and possible 2008 presidential candidate spoke at the old Wilshire Theatre on Wilshire Boulevard, which Temple of the Arts has purchased to transform into its permanent home.

Though she spoke about forgiveness, the senator did not specifically address the White House adultery of her husband, former President Bill Clinton. Instead, she discussed broad religious themes of forgiveness and also how impressed she was at the 1994 inauguration of South African President Nelson Mandela, where the longtime political prisoner gave prominent seating to three guards who treated him compassionately. "Three of his former jailers," she said.

"I owe a great deal, in my own thinking about forgiveness, to the tradition that you are celebrating and honoring today," she said to a filled theater with more than 1,900 people. "It just struck me how fortunate we are to have an opportunity to take time out as you are doing, here on Yom Kippur, to think of the large issues that really matter in life."

"Forgiveness is not a luxury. It's a responsibility in the personal and the public life," Clinton said. "Each year, going back to Leviticus, the Jewish people have recognized both the psychological and theological power of atonement and forgiveness."

When she finished, Temple of the Arts Rabbi David Baron kissed the senator on the cheek and said Clinton's words were appreciated by, "a couple of thousand very opinionated and very hungry Jewish people."

Clinton also was in town to do some Hollywood fundraising, and among those listening to the senator's sermon was CNN host Larry King.

"I've known her a long time," he told *The Journal*, adding, "I'm not an observant Jew. I come [to synagogue on] Yom Kippur and the holidays out of respect to my late parents."

Watchfulness was another aspect of the holiday season. In the wake of potential

terror threats, security was in force at many synagogues and on the minds of congregation leaders. Among locations where the Los Angeles Police Department stationed patrol cars were the Santa Monica Boulevard headquarters of the Anti-Defamation League, Young Israel of Century City shul on Pico Boulevard and on Olympic Boulevard at the Westside Jewish Community Center, where the Ikar spiritual community held services.

Police and synagogue security officials reported no incidents, although there were the usual parking hassles and a parking ticket for a huge red sedan parked entirely in a red zone near Sinai Temple in Westwood.

Inside, before a capacity crowd at the Conservative shul, Rabbi David Wolpe talked about limits, limitlessness, Judaism's eternal values and, "to cherish memory, which is our bridge to forever."

"We live in a world of limits," Wolpe said. "The inside is limitless. Our limits aren't the essence of us.... Judaism believes that people never end, we are limitless."

Long ago, Wolpe said, "pagans worshipped what they could see.... And Judaism said no. We are the devotees of the intangible. The unseen is eternal. We insist on the reality of the spirit. Not to trust our

senses but to trust more than our senses."

Memory consumed much of Studio City's small Congregation Beth Meier on Yom Kippur, part of the first High Holiday services without the Traditional-Conservative shul's beloved founder, Rabbi Meier Schimmel. He died peacefully Sept. 30 in Encino at age 89, almost 47 years after opening the shul.

Beth Meier congregants, including the rabbi's two daughters, gathered at the Beverly Garland Holiday Inn, nearby in North Hollywood, where the shul's new young rabbi led services.

"I've never not seen my father on the pulpit in my life," said daughter Selma Schimmel. "The only visions I have of the High Holidays are his dancing, his melodies, his voice."

This was also the first Yom Kippur service without Meier for comic actor Larry Miller, who became close to the rabbi over the past 13 years and attended this year's services with fellow actor Stephen Tololowsky.

After saying the very last prayer of Yom Kippur, Miller told *The Journal* that he was very much at peace with Meier's passing, gesturing with an index finger upward and saying, "It's wonderful because we're here and he's there — and there's a *there*, there." ■